

Problems of Urbanisation with special reference to Punjab, Haryana and Delhi

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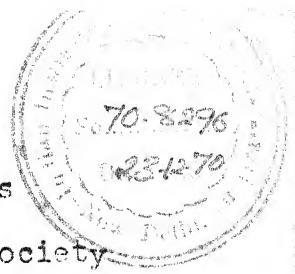


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INTRODUCTION



Urbanisation is a physical process, which is inevitable in a primarily agrarian and closed rural society as ours. India, covers an area of 3,276,141 squarekilometers and a population of 494.6 millions, the majority of which lives in rural surroundings and only 79 millions were reported in 1965 to live in 2,002 urban areas. The urban areas are characterised by a large population, high literary rate, quick and diverse means of communication, and a heterogeneity of linguistic, religious, professional and other groups whereas the rural setting has "distinctiveness, smallness, homogeneity and all providing self-sufficiency". The interaction between the two is inevitable and it has been consciously or unconsciously going on.

Ever since Independence, the subject engaged a scant attention from politicians, academicians and administrators. For a majority of the rural folk, urbanisation is a new phenomenon, to an academician it is complex and for an administrator, it is not altogether an unfamiliar field but the one presenting unfamiliar problems and issues. To an average man in the town, it is a mushroom growth.

The Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration in collaboration with the Department of Public Administration, Panjab University, organised one day seminar on "Problems of Urbanization with special reference to Panjab, Haryana and Delhi",

in which the senior government officers of Town and Country Planning of Panjab and Haryana Governments, Executive Officers of some Municipal Committees of Panjab and Haryana, representatives of the Centre for training and Research in Municipal Administration, New Delhi, members of the Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, members of the Faculty and Research Scholars of the Department of Public Administration and lecturers of the Panjab University Evening College participated.

Shri J.D.Sharma, IAS, Director Food & Supplies, Haryana and Honorary Secretary of the Regional Branch introduced the subject and called for a positive attitude in dealing with the problems of urbanisation. The Seminar then proceeded with a few observations made by Prof.G.Mukharji, Director, Centre for Training and Research in Municipal Administration, Indian Institute of Public Administration.

After the talk of Prof.Mukharji, Dr.B.S.Khanna, Senior Professor and Head of the Department of Public Administration who was in the chair framed certain specific issues and there was a free and frank discussion.

I kept record of the proceedings in my own humble way and my efforts are before the readers.

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Summary of Shri G.Mukharji's talk on
"Urbanisation with special reference
to Punjab, Haryana and Delhi".

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Mr. Mukharji started his lecture by defining what exactly has been the process of urbanisation and how we identify ourselves with the problem. The main characteristics of an urban area, as generally accepted for census purposes, are prescribed minimum density, a minimum total population, and a marked predominance of non-agricultural occupation in the working force. This is certainly one method of identification, but it must be admitted that there is no precise and universally accepted definition so far. In the Indian context, the general definition is that there should be concentration of population freely. In the riverain states, like Kerala the concentration of people is in the villages and villagers are occupied in the rural vocations. The non-agricultural component of the population determines the trend of urbanisation. The non-rural character of the occupation pattern is certainly a very major consideration and the rate of change of this segment is often considered to be a sure indication of urbanisation. Naturally, these reflect changes in the shape of land-use. Other attributes which have come to be associated with urban areas are ancillary. Good roads, protected water supply, electricity, public transport, local government, etc. do also reflect some degree of urbanisation. The pattern of the

urban-economy is an important factor to be taken into consideration and this has a direct bearing on the employment opportunities and results in migration which adds to the population concentration and creates administrative problems.

If the concentration of population of human beings which determines the pattern of economic life is affected, there is going to be a change in the mode of utilizing the land.

When the urban process starts in motion, that is to say, that large number of people start living at a certain place and their occupation pattern changes, this very process causes other repercussions. There is bound to be a certain amount of disparity in their living and also a certain amount of hostility. Among these groups, social tensions are likely to generate. The problems of community organisation and balancing do give rise to such abnormal situations. These sociological tensions have to be solved. This particular element in urban scene is further aggravated by more or less continuous migration of people into those areas. Migration in Punjab and Haryana, perhaps, is caused mainly because of more employment opportunities in urban areas. There is gradually a pressure on land. By and large, timely attention is not paid to the changes that are taking place in the urban centres leading to generally speaking rapid deterioration in the urban development. In fact, the rapid growth of population in many places has only helped to lower the standards of living services and

amenities as the resource levels have not been rising at the rate at which the population has been increasing. Lots of things have to be done entirely on the physical plane, for instance, you have to arrange for water supply, transport communications in bigger ways. Hospitals and other urban amenities have also ^{be} provided.

In the case of major towns in the States of Punjab and Haryana the change in the population structure has by and large not been very marked. This particular part of India has a fairly large density and per capita income is very high. Some of the towns have, however, been showing a certain rise, all of a sudden. Amritsar shows a very small increase, whereas Pathankot shows a phenomenal increase of 100 per cent. Yamunanagar, Faridabad, Ballabgarh and Gurgaon show reasonable increase while in the case of Sonipat the increase is not significant. For the industrial growth, there has been a particular tendency in migration from other areas. There have also been stray cases of rapid industrialisation of industrial growth at certain points of concentration like Ludhiana in Punjab and Faridabad in Haryana. A big component of the rural population is leaving for urban areas mainly with a view to reducing pressure on agricultural land and more industries are being set up to provide employment opportunities. The larger the town, the bigger the rise in population, and this is particularly so because currently opportunities for employment exist there.

The infra-structure is there, e.g. power, communications, water banks, markets, repair facilities and so on, so that more people are bound to come to those areas. It has been happening in towns like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi and still for political reasons where small towns stagnate or do not give enough opportunities for employment certain towns have shown tendency to remain static like Sonepat to compare with. The means have to be devised to attract people from such areas.

Most of the towns in Punjab and Haryana are small and we have to start thinking for the future of these areas. It is widely believed that in the next 20-25 years, there will be bigger influx into urban areas in Punjab and Haryana; we have to, therefore, start planning and lay proper emphasis to catch with the time. The detailed study should be made of the manner of the changes that are taking place structurally in these towns.

In the preparation of the Master Plan of Delhi, the planners were involved with the Government of India and the various Ministries and they discovered, before much damage could have been done, that there were not the necessary amenities for human existence, water supply, electricity, marketing etc. We do not probe into the social and economic problems of the human beings. The experience shows that the planning is a very comprehensive process which involves various disciplines - we have to see how best we can solve these complexs and see how best we can make the human beings life more happy and better.

A Master Plan is nothing else but a plan for living.

When we are making a plan for urban area or any area at all, it should be comprehensive and take into account the human needs in all its facets. Departmentalism is one of the biggest enemy of Planning. There is thus the need for one agency where plans are assembled and overall discussions are held. Technical men have their own views. It is the administrator who has to take a final decision after considering various factors. Some compromises have to be made. It is not suggested that compromise should be made as a rule in Planning. There should, however, be closer relationship between the administrator and the politician. Compartmental approach is bad and has created a lot of trouble. Plans have created fragmentation and imbalances. Every body knows the requirements of the rural and the urban people. Priorities have to be decided keeping in view what is universally required by human beings. Priorities should depend on actual needs. The Planning process itself will have to be adjusted, cut down, pruned or modified on the basis of circumstances.

While the plans are to be implemented, there is the problem of money. The subsidies or grants-in-aid are very corrupting. People are made dependent on it. The adjustment of loans should be through easy instalments. Loans will provide pucca answer. I am happy that the central and state Governments offer such loans but the proper utilisation of the loans need be ensured so that the loans are used for the purpose for which they are advanced.

Land belongs to the community, and is a good asset. Negatively used or not properly husbanded, land can create serious troubles. In New Delhi, bungalows have been constructed on 3 to 5 acres of land. Land is not being properly utilised because certain categories of people want to live in extreme comfort. These are all vested interests. A good plan must destroy all vested interests. A good plan must ensure proper utilisation of the land and its allotment must be done for the benefit of the community as a whole. There are some states which have gone in for demographic studies. They have provided the data and the solutions. There should be a specialised planning body. It should plan intensively, keeping in view the requirements in the Indian context. It should be a self-contained unit. There must be groups or an individual group which should be hierarchically above the technical experts and the Plan should be such as is acceptable to the people.

At the local or regional level the local bodies should be given a free hand to plan. They should not be left to the whims and caprices of the District Magistrate or the Director of Industries. , There must be legislation to support their planning and plan implementation. The local authority is well aware of the needs of the people. May be, it is not working properly. Just now but it must work better in future. Mr.Mukharji concluded his speech by saying,"The work of detailed planning should be handed over to the local bodies who should have a small

group of planners at their disposal through some statutory or informal arrangement and the Regional Planning Organisation must be a partner to it. There should be coordination between the local planning and the regional planning!"

II

Discussion

After the lecture, the discussion was thrown open, one of the experienced Town Planners pinpointed the problems arising out of the concentration of people. With better standards of living, people want to live in better houses with ultra-modern facilities. There is a great influx of masses to the towns, but this problem is not receiving the serious attention which it should receive at the hands of the State Governments or the Central Government wherefrom most of the policies flow. It would be, he suggested "a worth-while proposition to set up a Commission on Urbanisation." Politicians, administrators, planners, technocrats have to play their own assigned roles in the plan formulation and implementation. He felt the urbanisation programme of old cities as extremely difficult. Instead of investing huge sums to develop the existing towns, it is always a wiser decision to go in for new ones.

Another participant said that an administrator and an Economist has to play his role in the framing of the Master Plan. The plan should not be rigid, and taking the town and country planning legislation(recently drafted)as the model to suit their own requirements. there should be provision in the legislation to suit our habits and changes developing in our social structure. When a plan is in the formulative stage, there comes specialisation, departmentalism and very often institutionalisation. One of

the participants said that there has not been adequate appreciation of the role of these institutions. It is the Delhi kind of set-up which is existing in most of the states or towns. He felt that when the attitude is collectively put together with the help of the Administrator, the Municipal Councillor, etc., there is no obstacle in the implementation of the plan. He observed, "I am not here criticising the Administrator because he has to handle the local politicians. He has his own problems. The plan had to be resisted by the vested interests on the excuse that certain amenities have to be provided here and there."

How the planning of urbanisation should keep pace with the day to day programmes, the example of Germany was cited. In the last World War, the German towns had been raised to the ground and the male population had diminished considerably in proportion to the females. They required completely new type of amenities to be provided in the matter of housing and urbanisation. Their outlook was completely changed.

As regards the suggestion of Mr. Mukharji about the institutional arrangements, whereby the urban local bodies should be made responsible for certain plans to be carried out after due coordination from various other disciplines, one participant felt that both in Punjab and Haryana, our local bodies may not be in a position to employ that kind of set up and to frame and implement plans. The State organisation should render necessary service to the local authorities atleast in the matter of formulation of plans

and their implementation.

Another useful suggestion came about the provincialisation of services, certain local bodies had been entrusted with plans but they are not in a mood to implement them because of certain local vested interests. There is the necessity of employing the staff on a provincial cadre and send them to the local bodies on deputation so that they are helpful in the implementation and execution of the plans so framed.

Another participant felt that the urban land policy has got to be consciously thought of. Through national subsidies or national loans, we can do something to better the lot of the existing towns and cities. For the development of a particular town, we spend lots of sums to provide the amenities to attract the growth of urbanisation. The benefits are enjoyed by the local landlords who are holding lands and they grow richer at the cost of the Government. We are putting all the amenities into the towns and making the local people much richer. He observed, "land should receive the same attention as wealth and woman."

The Chairman (Professor B.S.Khanna) summed up the issues emerging out of the talk and general remarks of some participants for concrete discussion among the participants. The following issues engaged the attention of the participants.

1. Is there adequate political support for the programmes of urban Planning and Development?

The consensus of opinion was that there was not

enough of political support for the plans framed by the Town and Country Planning officers from time to time.

The Master Plans and other Plans are made by the senior officers in the air-conditioned rooms or under the ceiling fans. Later, they are approved by the Government and then it goes to the local body for implementation. The common man should be associated with the planning and the politicians should also be associated at the proper stage.

The political support should come at the time when the plans are formulated.

It was also felt that with a change in the power of the political party, there is a change in the outlook of the Government. The whole scheme of plan is upset. One participant, however, felt that the attitude of the politicians is like-warm. Election manifestoes of several political parties during the last elections mention many programmes like increased agricultural production, grant of loans, fertilizers, etc. but there is hardly any mention with regard to town planning. There appears to be a rural bias in our political thinking. By way of remedy, it was suggested that if the administrator and the Town Planner has got the necessary amount of patience and perseverance, he can still find suitable political support and educate the political bosses.

Mr. Mukharji, however, felt that political support is there but one has to make an effort to get it. Citing the example of slum clearance programme in Delhi, he observed that

there was enough of political support and an Advisory Committee was set up and every programme was discussed there before it was implemented. For the political support, one requires a certain amount of tact. The slum-clearance Act was in force in Delhi but nothing was being done. It could not be done by a bureaucratic agency. The Delhi Municipal Corporation was involved and we were able to solve the problem of slum-clearance with the active association of the Corporation.

2. Is there enough integration between the regional plans and city plans? What is the attitude of the Panchayati Raj Institutions towards plans?

All the participants were of the view that there is lack of coordination between various planning bodies and the plan implementation. Take for example the implementation or framing of certain programmes in the rural areas. These are in different compartments which are completely divorced from the urban needs. One department is in the hands of the Panchayats-Panchayati Raj and the other is the Public Works Department. State Electricity Board has its own policies and many problems like water-logging etc. arise due to this lack of coordination of the various departments. There is nothing much of regional planning and our planning is only piecemeal. The comprehensive legislation is yet to come.

3. Should there be planning of new Towns or the replanning of old towns?

It was felt that much of money is wasted in renovating

the old towns and it would be convenient to have new towns. There can be a market town for a group of villages, which would help the villagers also. The difficulties of laying sewerage for the old towns is much more than the new ones. The extension of the old towns entails new problems. Some participants, however, felt that there should be planning of new towns but one cannot and should not dogmatise about it. The development of the new towns will be slow as they depend on the economic affluence of the people.

4. What are the real financial commitments necessary for the urbanisation policies and plans?

There was unanimity of opinion that there are various handicaps due to shortage of money. There should be better utilisation of money in the matter of city planning. The benefits are reaped by the speculators without spending anything. For the new towns, there should be revolving funds. Such funds can be generated by the sale of plots.

It was, however, felt that it would not be possible for the small local bodies to raise their resources from their own avenues. They will have to depend on external aid. The government shall have to provide them means for development of the areas according to plans.

One participant forcefully pleaded for the setting up of Planning cells in the local bodies. The big towns attract labour force because of industrialisation. Small ring towns are coming up. The expectancy of drawing more and more rural labour force to these small urban centres

partly of new type of rural/urban mixture in the states of Maharashtra, Gujrat and Haryana has not been envisaged by the classical western concept of urbanisation. Thus there is the need for involving the urban local bodies in the planning process. This involvement can be really fruitful if the political decisions taken by these bodies can be translated and the town and country planning can be usefully injected into other programmes which the local bodies undertake.

5. What are the difficulties or the problems which the Municipalities face in regard to the implementation of even some of the small segmented urban plans?

There was a general approval of the idea that the Municipal Committees should be associated with the implementation of the schemes. It was further emphasised that they should be associated during the framing of the schemes. They are well aware of the local needs. One participant who had been the administrator of a certain municipality pleaded for some sort of legislation which should make it binding on the part of the local bodies to execute the schemes within stipulated limit of time. Citing the example of one Municipal Committee he said, "After the partition of the country, the future potentialities of one town were foreseen and the local municipal committee, in consultation with the Town and Country Planning Department asked the authorities to chalk out the plan. There was the question of acquisition of land. After the framing of the scheme, certain areas were frozen and debarred from further

development and the result now is that there has been haphazard development. The municipality was not in a position to stop this growth. Certain schemes which were formulated by the Town and Country Planning were adopted by the Committee but were left completely to be executed by the Committee with the result that where 60 feet road was to be constructed, the people had encroached upon it in the course of time and there is complete change in the scheme." He felt that there is much of paper work and less of implementation.

It was also felt that it would be better to discuss the plans etc. with the President and the Members from time to time and favourable conditions should be created for its implementation. Legal binding is not necessary but still it is required because encroachments have become the order of the day.

We must, however, guard against the vicious circle, which is started when sites are developed partially. The Committee start charging octroi. Hardly any amenities are provided by the departments. One participant who was closely associated with municipal committees was very critical of the lack of interest shown by the Municipalities in playing their assigned role. He felt that the municipalities should pay developmental charges to the Government.

The directorates of local bodies do serve some useful purpose but they might become another agency for harassing the local bodies. Mr. Mukharji felt that the Directorate which is an executive wing of the Govt. should have over it some sort of a Board with statutory or political status.

III

Working Paper

Note on "Urbanisation with special reference to Delhi, Punjab and Haryana."

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The main characteristics of an urban area as generally accepted for census purposes, are a prescribed minimum density, a minimum total population, and a marked predominance of non-agricultural occupation in the working force. This is certainly one method of identification, but it must be admitted that there is no precise and universally accepted definition so far. The non-rural character of the occupation pattern is certainly a very major consideration and the rate of change of this segment is often considered to be a sure indication of urbanisation. Naturally, these reflect themselves ultimately in space in the shape of change in land. Other attributes which have come to be associated with urban areas are ancillary and consequential good roads, protected water supply, electricity, public transport, local government, etc. The pattern of the urban economy is an important factor to be taken into consideration, and this has a direct bearing on the employment opportunities and the course and volume of immigration, which add to the population and create administrative problems.

By and large, timely attention is not paid to the changes that are taking place in the urban centres leading to generally speaking, rapid deterioration in the urban environment. In fact, the rapid growth of population in many places has only helped to lower the standards of the

existing services and amenities as the resource levels have not been rising at the rate at which the population has been increasing.

The States of Haryana and Punjab have been carved out of the former state of Punjab and precise population figures for the two states are not available. However, a study of the census reports for 1961 indicates that the pace of urbanisation in these states has not been very rapid as a general rule. They both continue to be predominantly agricultural. There have been stray cases of rapid industrial growth at certain points of concentration like Ludhiana in the Punjab and Faridabad in Haryana. Here the occupation pattern shows a significant change and provides an indication to the degree of urbanisation. However, the growth of population at any place, irrespective of whether it is mainly due to industrial expansion, needs immediate attention, because the necessary services and amenities have to be provided by the urban local body concerned. Equally, with a view to bringing about a proper balance in the national economy, steps have to be taken to vary the structural pattern of the working force so as to divert people from agricultural to industry. For this purpose, the local bodies and the state government will have to provide not only the necessary land, but also the infra-structure in the shape of power, water and communications. It is true that in Punjab and Haryana the contemporary situation is not acute; that probably is a blessing, because the kind of damage

that has taken place in the towns and cities in other states in the wake of rapid urbanisation and industrial growth has not taken place to that extent in the cities and towns of these two states. It is, therefore, possible for the governments concerned, including the urban local bodies to re-plan their activities so as to keep pace with the rate of growth and thereby ensure that back-longs do not accumulate in any sphere, particularly in the matter of housing and other essential facilities. The case of Delhi is opposite where rapid growth took place immediately after Independence and the city governments were not prepared for the sudden change. The result was the over-all lowering of standards and scarcity in regard to the supply of water, electricity, transport, education, medical facilities, etc. Luckily, the Central Govt. got interested in this situation and quickly got a Master Plan prepared for Delhi and it is hoped that things will not now deteriorate any further, if timely steps are taken to implement the provisions of the Master Plan. Because of the influence of Delhi, the Master Plan of Delhi has forewarned Gaziabad and Faridabad, and it is heartening to learn that both these towns are now working according to an approved plan so as to meet the problems of the future adequately. This then is the major need of the day- a forecast of the rate of growth and therefore of expanding needs, the preparation of integrated plans for the urban areas and their implementation in a rational way.

It is necessary to add briefly the need for looking at such developments not from the narrow angle of the city

itself but as a problem of regional development. Unless economic activity is planned in a larger regional frame-work and industries, particularly those not tied to sources of raw material, fuel, etc., are used as tools of balanced development, the trend towards the concentration of basic and capital good industries in already developed and currently over-congested centres will continue, resulting in aggravation of the existing imbalances and disparities. The social changes that every one desires so much will not occur in areas or pockets which are economically depressed and backward. Thus, though urban plans will have to be made, it appears necessary that these should be made within the regional context. It may appear that efforts in this direction would result in heavier initial overhead costs, but in the long run, the total benefit would be far greater than in allowing infrastructure to be strengthened in currently industrially advanced pockets only to the neglect of new potential areas.

Thus a discussion on 'Organisation with special reference to Delhi, Punjab and Haryana' would focus attention on the following major points:-

- (a) Concept and criteria for the delineation of an urban region;
- (b) The trend of urbanisation in this area;
- (c) Inter-State regions: Plan formulation and plan implementation;
- (d) Intra-State regions: Problems of coordination in plan preparation and implementation; and
- (e) State-level machinery for planning and problems of administration at the state, regional and local levels.

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